

WINERY OF THE MONTH



WINERY from cover

props. The brothers built and flew the first monoplane with just two wings instead of the double set that the Wright Brothers had pioneered. After a tragic crash that killed one of the brothers, the company set aside building airplanes and went on to manufacturing other inventions. The Frostifugo, a wind propeller system that controlled frost formation in the fields was one, followed by the Jacuzzi Jet Pump. Rachele tragically died of a heart attack in 1937 at the age of 50, but the brothers continued to refine and extend the applications of his work. Jacuzzi Brothers became the leader in the water pump industry with applications for wells, swimming pools, the boating industry, and finally the whirlpool bath, among other uses.

Cousins Ron Fenolio, C.E.O. of Jacuzzi Family Winery, and Fred Cline its owner and the owner of Cline Cellars across the street on Arnold Drive in Sonoma County are grandsons of two Jacuzzi brothers, Valeriano and Gelindo, who bought adjoining farms in the 1920s to make a living for their families during one of the down-turns in the Jacuzzi Brothers business, of which there were many during the first half of its existence. When Ron Fenolio tells the family story, he emphasizes its entrepreneurial spirit, beginning with their great-grandfather Giovanni Jacuzzi. A cabinet-maker and carpenter by trade as was his father, Giovanni found that during hard times in Friuli, he could make additional money by showing up at the local train station to carry trunks and give travel advice to people, who passed through the station. Before long, he was making more money by selling major Italian newspapers at the station. And because he would engage travelers in conversation and learned who wanted to buy or sell real estate, Giovanni began to act as a broker before the service formally existed.

In addition to the Jacuzzi Brothers empire in the United States, subsequent generations of

family members have founded manufacturing and construction companies, real estate businesses, and automobile dealerships. Others have carried on the family farming tradition, with various members in addition to Fred Cline, developing wineries. Others have established themselves in the professions as teachers, physicians, and attorneys, including Ron Fenolio, who started his career as a real estate, tax, and securities attorney in San Francisco but went on to become an officer, director, or principal for auto parts manufacturing and assembly, wine production and marketing, REITS, mining and oil and gas production, semiconductor fabrication, and residential and commercial development with activities here and abroad.

Certainly, the Jacuzzi family story is a tale of extraordinary entrepreneurial achievement. But it is also a story of cooperation and dedication among family members that continues today. When Fred Cline founded Jacuzzi Family Vineyards in 2007, he asked his cousin Ron to join him in managing the new business. Both cousins had early, endearing memories of family gatherings on their grandfathers' farms, where everyone came together to socialize just as they came together to work. As Jacuzzi Brothers grew, the family chose from its own ranks whenever possible for the labor and management that it required. Fred's dream was to honor that past with the new winery, specializing in Italian wine-grape varieties grown in California even though the category has had disappointing results in the marketplace.

Ron says that wineries made mistakes. They called the category "Cal-Ital," which he thinks denigrated the wines and prevented individual wines from emerging from the pack. California wineries never referred to wines made from French winegrapes as Franco-American, he says. Instead, we all came to know Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah, Pinot Noir, among many

others, for their unique qualities. Ron also feels that California winemakers planted the wrong grapes for the American market. Sangiovese is too acidic for American palates, he thinks. But he feels that the white Arneis will be as successful as Pinot Grigio and that rich reds like Nero d'Avola, Lagrein, Montepulciano, Aleatico, or Sagrantino will make history here, wines that Jacuzzi Family Vineyards has already produced and bottled along with the more familiar Pinot Grigio, Nebbiolo, Barbera, Primitivo (a clone of Zinfandel), and Pinot Nero (*Pinot Noir* in French). In other words, to honor the Jacuzzi family, Fred and Ron were willing to start a winery without precedent, but one whose wines would demonstrate intrinsic beauty and value.

Like the wines, the elegant 18,000 square-foot winery is also a tribute to the Jacuzzi family, the core of the building modeled on the family's original home in Italy. The two-story structure is built around a court yard that is open at the back. Beyond the imported 17-foot stone fountain, visitors see vine-covered hills and the distant outlines of low mountains at the horizon. The structure appears to be made of sand-colored stone, surrounded by flower gardens and dwarfed olive trees. Suspended from an open top floor, a Venetian glass chandelier hangs down into the inside entry, with the olive oil tasting-room on the right, where visitors taste different blends from the on-site olive pressing facility, and the wine-tasting room on the left, where people line the polished bar and taste enthusiastically from a menu of Jacuzzi wines while the staff answers their questions.

"We're trying to establish a profile for Italian wines in California like Robert Mondavi did for Cabernet Sauvignon in the Napa Valley. We want to make the broadest based varietals with true Italian style, not Cal-Ital, but as true to the Italian form as we can. That's my passion," Ron emphasizes.



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California *Winery of the Month*



The Grand Piazza

The Legacy Lives *Jacuzzi Family Vineyards*

To escape poverty, the first of thirteen Jacuzzi brothers and sisters began their exodus to the United States in 1907, leaving their home near Casarsa in the northeastern region of Friuli. Valeriano and Francesco were the first two brothers to arrive in the United States, followed by Rachele, Giuseppe, Giocondo, and Gelindo. In 1915, Valeriano returned to Italy to help his father move the rest of the family, but the outbreak of World War I detained them in the country, where the family suffered but survived. Finally in 1920, all 13 children and their parents Giovanni and Teresa were united in and around Berkeley, California, where the Jacuzzi brothers had established their own business, designing and manufacturing airplane parts, at that time an experimental industry. The business lurched from one direction to another initially under the direction of self-taught, scientific genius Rachele Jacuzzi. By 1965, the U.S. government had granted more than 50 patents for Jacuzzi inventions. But the invention that made Jacuzzi a household word was the whirlpool bath and therapy spa. Three generations of Jacuzzi family members made their livings from the company, which had plants across the United States and the world when the family sold it in 1979.

Although each brother made an enormous contribution to the business, Rachele was the scientific genius, who was basically responsible for the inventions that propelled the company forward. Except for several months of formal aeronautics training in Milano after he was discharged from the Italian army, he was self-taught. Here in the United States, he reached out to faculty members at nearby University of California to discuss some of his ideas. But other than these contacts, he worked out his ideas through continuous thought and experimentation with the help of his brothers. On a theoretical level, he described phenomena which anticipated the fission of atoms for energy production. He was one of the first to discuss the possibility of black holes in the universe, of launching satellites, and storing solar energy. And he thought extensively about the properties and uses of water. He designed and patented a helicopter-like aircraft before the first one was successful in Germany.

Some of his many ideas began to have highly successful applications at Jacuzzi Brothers, Inc. The company manufactured the lightest and most successful airplane propeller, which became the standard in the industry before metal

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CelebrationsWineClub.com

Anna Maria Knapp, Owner
75 Pelican Way G1
San Rafael, CA 94901

1-800-700-6227

Celebrate@
[CelebrationsWineClub.com](mailto:Celebrate@CelebrationsWineClub.com)

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